

Paper: Chicago Tribune RedEye Edition (IL)

Title: What's your deal breaker?

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Date: June 2, 2005

He scratches himself in public. She chews her nails. Getting there. She won't wax it, he won't kiss it. Closer. She hears him say "Yes, Mommy." And we've hit the proverbial mother lode. Clear the runway, the deal breaker has arrived. Fair or not.

These quirky little sparks can burn up a relationship in moments. No explanation needed. It's the "I just want to scratch my skin raw when I'm near you" sort of thought. If you're so annoyed by a person and their actions, listen to your gut.

You need to establish your list of non-negotiables in a mate--the must-haves/can't-live-withouts. It doesn't matter how trivial or huge they seem. Nothing's right, nothing's wrong, just your basics.

Then tap into what kills you about these quirks. Do these confound your core beliefs or just irritate your sense of smell? Because, as you know, everyone's carrying some sort of crazy.

Sexual deal breakers are often the most difficult to manage. Because no matter how hard your partner is trying to swing it, slap it and tap it, it just may not be enough. It's called chemistry, and you either have it or you don't. A lack of a tight physical bond is a deal breaker for some and just a heartbreaker for others. Either way, if it lingers, the connection rarely gets stronger.

One reader said her boyfriend would be perfect except for his "need to watch porn while they're making love." From the get-go, he told her this was his "thing" and it was non-negotiable.

Typically, in this scenario you should be able to negotiate and find a mutual comfort level. She's either going to be riding that bull with a couple of clowns, or she'll tell the dude to buck off. There is no perfect, just perfect enough for you. And if it's not right, you have the right to bolt.

Non-negotiables are also deployed to mask inadequacies. Take Jim, for example. Jim, who's no Rhodes Scholar, was dating a smart woman. When Jim heard a story about a foreign dignitary, he went home to test his lady on her political knowledge. She didn't know who he was talking about. So he left.

His reaction might be understandable if he weren't so dimwitted himself. But Jim wants what he isn't. No shame there. It's common to want a partner stronger than you in some ways. It's the ying and the yang. Yet deal breakers happen when people don't consider the other benefits a possible partner offers.

It's easy to cast others aside. Leaving flailing nose hairs seems simpler than leaving an entire person. That's not to say if you feel annoyed, you shouldn't move on. You should. Don't pretend to accept more quirks than you're able. It does no one any good. Just be honest with yourself about why you're calling it quits.

And if you feel like you've been victim to someone else's deal breakers, no worries. It's not you, it's just their take on something about you. One man's trash will always be another man's treasure. Otherwise how could Paris Hilton still be newsworthy?

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